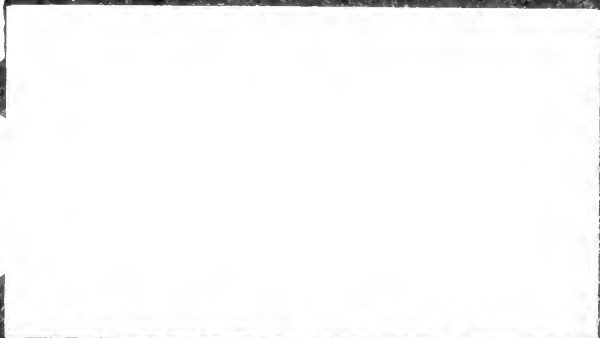


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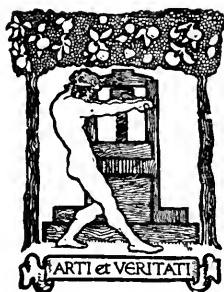
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VAGROM VERSES

BY

EDWARD N. TEALL



BOSTON: RICHARD G. BADGER

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TO MY MOTHER

a critic

not grudging of praise

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VAGROM VERSES

THE WAYFARER

I

Travelling the dusty road—
Merrily I went—
I mind me well how it befell
I heard one lament:
A Pilgrim weary 'neath the load
Of years, gray and bent.

"Greeting, sir," I cheerly cried,
"In God's good grace!"
Sadly then the Pilgrim sighed—
Woeful his face,
Woeful his tones—replied,
Slow, like his pace:

"Good young sir, I greatly fear"—
Shaking his head—
"Empty is song, the world's a-wrong,
True faith is dead.
Nor lives religion long,"
Sadly he said.

" 'Tis a degenerate day,"
Mournful he mused;
"And to the days of old as dross to purest gold,
Things are not as they used,
Mankind is gone astray;
Once, truly, *I* enthused—
Now for the world I pray.
Ah, me, the weary way!"

Then, taking up his staff,
A tear in his eye:
"Farewell," he said; "God's wheaten bread
Be yours, not this world's chaff!"
"Farewell," said I—

Oh, how the wide fields laugh
Under the sky!

II

Travelling the dusty road—
Thoughtfully I went—
I mind me well it then befell
I heard one lament:
A Pilgrim young who forward strode,
On the goal intent.

“I pray you but a moment, friend,”
I cried, “to pause.”
“Time is flying,” he replying.
“Whither doth your effort tend?
This haste—the cause?”
“Crowning at the journey’s end!
Yet, nearer as I wend,
The goal withdraws.”

“Nay, speak less darkly, please,”
I dared to ask;
“Friend of the way, more plainly say
What gainful things are these,
Yonside the task?”
“Fortune, nor fame, nor ease—
Knowledge of mysteries
Under the mask!”

“Success,” I wished. He flung
Crisp “Farewell” to me. Tell me: of us three—
Pilgrim old and Pilgrim young
And Wayfarer free—
As you have heard them sung,
Which would you be?

THE CRISIS

I wonder: When will it come,
That moment of uttermost test
When the naked soul is confessed?
Will it come when the drum and the bugle wide
Summon the nations of earth to ride
Like Vikings of eld on a turbulent tide
On the war wave's red spumed crest?

I wonder: When will it come,
That soul searching moment, to me—
And where, on the land or the sea?
Will the heart be dumb and the hand be numb,
Or the spirit stout when it takes the list
For the fateful course of the battle tryst
From the first ordained to be?

I wonder: When will it come,
That sudden unsealing of sight—
In the day or the terrible night?
Whatever the time, wherever the place,
Forfend, ye fates, that there be disgrace
When I and my self stand face to face
Each asking: Who is this wight?

Then, courage! Whenever it come,
'Mid the hum of the lethal ball
On the field where the stricken fall—
In the foul arena's stifling dust,
Stained with the red wine of battle lust—
Let it come when it will, as come it must;
Courage to answer the call!

Then, wisdom! Whenever it come,
The moment of critical choice
When the calm, imperative voice
Bids behold the divergent ways of life,
With unknown possibilities rife,

And choose; then wisdom be mine to plumb
The mystery, and rejoice.

I wonder: When will it come,
That glorious moment, to me—
And what shall the issue be?
Each passing moment the future unlocks;
Whose faith is fast as the continent rocks,
He dreadeth not fate and its rudest shocks—
From defeat wrests victory!

THE JAILER

Brusque January, warder of the hills,
Proclaims with windy fanfare empery
And sends his minions forth with lock and key,
To make all fast. They seal the gelid rills,
The frozen boles that no sap, rising, thrills—
Bind fast the fallow fields, with eery glee,
Clog up the busy town's machinery
And wreak upon a weary world their wills.

Too sanguine January! They are frail,
These rough wrought gyves of thine; and there
is one
Shall bring deliverance to the captive earth—
For there will come a time of breaking jail,
When streams leap forth and fields drink in the
sun,
And Spring fills Winter's hemlock cup with
mirth!

THE DISTRESSED DAMSEL AND THE VERY PERFECT KNIGHT

Old Winter is a surly lout,
And Spring a maiden fair
With garlands in her hair
And smiles and blushes rare,
Who could not drive the tyrant out.—

Although her wiles and pretty pout
Are potent past compare
When hearts are staked, beyond a doubt
She would be sadly put about
If none should help her there!

He shakes his hoary locks at her
And growls: "I will not go—
'Tis Winter tells you so!"
Alas! she does not know
How feebly his old pulses stir,
How false his words of valor were;
And she is weak with woe—
Soft raining tears her sweet eyes blur.
"I beg you mercy, cruel sir,"
She murmurs faint—when, lo!

Across the plain there rides at speed
A very perfect knight,
Enarmored all in white,
His lance as sunray bright:
"Now, who is this doth mercy plead?
And who is this refuseth heed?
Dear damsel, name thy plight!"
She tells him all her tale of need;
With levelled lance and charging steed
He drives the churl aflight.

"An end to his false fronted power
Who had not heart to stand!"
He takes her lily hand
And leads her through the land
Delivered in that happy hour
From its oppressor dree and dour. —
So is it spring is bland
Yet rugged too; the perfect flower
Of strong sun wed with gentle shower:
And very featly planned!

THE SURVIVOR

Two score of us sung when the way was young—
Two score, and a bold band we,
With never a man in the caravan
But yearned for the sandy sea.
Two score of us died in the desert wide—
Two score of us died, save one:
Save the one who tells of the forty hells
We lived ere the way was done.

In the swift twilight of the tropic night,
With the last stride of his steed
Ere his great heart broke, a courier spoke
The call of a comrade's need.
"The heathen," he cried, and the call rang wide,
Loud echoing, tent to tent,
"The heathen are out in a rabble rout,
And our camp's last round is spent!"

Two score of us rode where the moonlight glowed
On the desert floor as white
As a winding sheet—and the wan rays' cheat
Made a corpse face of the night.
Two score of us lay when the arrow Day
Shot out of the Archer's bow
On the clotted sand of that godless land—
Two score (saving one) laid low!

We laughed and we sung when the way was young;
We sallied forth with a hymn
To the god of war—then we steadied, for
The errand we ran was grim;
And I in the lead was a fool indeed,
A fool and a murderer too—
For the devils made us an ambuscade,
And I, I alone, won through!

And the fatal lure? 'Twas the love-light pure
Flashed over the western sea;
'Twas the thought of one 'neath the homeland sun
Who waited and dreamed of me—
Who waited and dreamed while the red rays
gleamed
On the desert floor as red,
While the sun of love from the gray above
Shone down upon honor dead!

REVOLVER REEF

Now, podner, look-a-here: you want to quit—
Can't see no future brighter'n the pit
O' blasted hopes an' shadder ha'nted gloom,
Lost miners' souls a-pannin' out their doom.
Sore on the luck, you want to turn your back
On this here proposition, which it's black
Enough, Gawd knows, an' sartin I'll admit;
But, podner, 'tain't no time, right now, to quit!

I dopes it out like this: when things is punk
As they kin be, it ain't no sense to funk,
Lay down an' squeal. There ain't no wuss
'N what's the wust. Here's what some poet cuss
Has wrote about it—thing they made me learn,
A kid at school. Somehow, it stuck: "The turn
O' tide's its lowest ebb." Now, pard, a leaf
Out o' the story o' Revolver Reef.

Tale come to me, o' course, at second hand
(Fust bein' bird meat, in Mashonaland),
An' run this wise: Two chaps, like you an' me,
Out for the yaller means o' misery
An', duplicatin' us two fools ag'in,
Clean god-forsaken—burros bone an' skin,
Grub gone, an' not a cussed thing in sight
But earth's big bones up-croppin', bare an' white.

One on 'em—oh, jest such a sort as you—
He swore he'd quit, an' went an' done it, too;
Jest—simply—*quit!* It ain't no consequence,
Sech carrion ain't, in any common sense;
But see how this worked out. The other lad,
Believin' better's next to bottom bad,
The same as I be'n tellin' you, hung on—
Deef, dumb an' blind, half starvin', still hung on.

Well, that pore devil done his time in hell,
An' then, as luck would have it, simply fell—
More like a corpse 'n any livin' thing—
Plumb in a survey camp. "Jest one more fling,"
Says he, when they was handin' out advice
(Quite scientific like) to shake it, "with the dice;
Jest one throw more, to see how luck'll break—
That is, if you gents cares to lay the stake."

An', say, he struck it, too, he sho'ly did,
An' struck it rich—he *were* the candy kid!
One day, a-settin' on a heap o' stones,
Jest gazin' 'round, he seen a bunch o' bones,
Picked clean an' dry as any autumn leaf,
An' by 'em laid a gun—*his podner's*, Chief!
Well, now the story's purty nigh to told—
Them rocks was full, *plumb* full, o' virgin gold!

Now, podner, look-a-here. It makes me sick,
This quittin' talk o' yourn. You got to stick,
That's all they is in to it. Sabby that?
No member of this firm—an' this goes, pat—
Won't have no epitaffy to the tune:
"Here lies a miner, which he quit too soon!"
But when the last, lone card is out, an' croak
Time comes—look, podner, *look*: good Gawd, it's
smoke!

THE KEEPER OF THE LIGHT "SURREN- DERS TO THE AUTHORITIES"

The brand of guilt is on my heart,
Upon my hands the stain—
Incarnadined with kindred blood,
As were the hands of Cain;
Oh, worse than fratricidal crime—
Son by his father slain!

Nay, seize me not—stand back! Ye need
Not look upon me so—
For I am here of mine own will,
And would not, might I, go:
Christ's death upon the Tree was not,
Meseemeth, greater woe!

Think not "'Tis but a crazy dream,
Some phantom sired by Night
And mothered by a brooding brain";
For—I—have seen a sight—
More dear to me than living was
The honor of the Light!

You've seen a mother with her child—
Your child! E'en so we nursed,
With more than lover's zeal, the Light,
Its welfare ever first:
But oh, the loneliness of life
In that stone cell accurst!

And Leo—that's my boy, you know—
He had a love ashore,
While I had neither kith nor kin
Save him—nor needed more;
So I was well enough content,
But his young heart was sore.

The vacant sky, the sobbing sea,
The blown and blinding spray,
The voices of lost winds that drooled
The livelong empty day,
The ghostly peopled solitude
Stole Leo's mind away.

One day—that day!—as dark drew near
And time to flash our light
Athwart the dun skies oceanward
(It was a hellish night!)
My Leo stopped me on the stair—
His eyes were fever bright!

I sought to sooth him and prevail,
But sought, alas, in vain;
And while I labored, sick at heart,
The night rushed on amain:
O God, the duel in the dark,
And on these hands the stain!

O God, the battle—and the stain—
And his mad lust to kill!
O God, the light that awful night
That pierced the fog bank chill,
But could not 'lume my darkened heart!—
Do with me as you will!

NICOTIAN FANCIES

By my solitary fireside in the middle hours of night
I am dreaming wide horizons in the embers' fitful
light—
Lost amid the city's millions, lonely in the crowded
ways,
I withdraw the baffling curtain, and the drama of
the days
Is enacted, swift and silent, to my uncompanioned
gaze.

'Tis the magic of Nicotia that absolves dull vision's
seal,
Shows the facts of life are fictions and the dreams
alone are real.

Step by step the plot develops, and the actors come
and go
Like the shadows of a cloud fleet when capricious
breezes blow,
Now with swift, impulsive passage, now reluctantly
and slow.

How the Master of the Drama weaves the slender
threads of fate
In reticulated pattern; how the puppets love and
hate,
Strut and stagger, curse and worship, thinking
theirs the pilot will,
Though the Master, unacknowledged, rules the
mechanism still—
How the little actors agonize, declaim their love,
their rage,
Never heeding that the Playwright foreordained
and set the stage!

Here the priest kneels at the cotside of the miser
who for gold
In the madness of the marketplace his heaven-hope
has sold,
All unrecking of the moment he must drop his dear
bought dross,
With his wealth too poor to purchase finger grip
upon the Cross.
Here the mother to her bosom clasps her infant,
breathing wild
Incoherent supplication for the world-way of her
child;
Here a son, the prayers forgotten once he whispered
at her knee,

Gnaws the husks of late repentance. In her cottage
on the lea
Waits the sailor's lonely sweetheart, patient watcher
of the sea.

Here the nun in pious pity on her mercy mission
bound
Halts to raise a sister, crushed with sin and sor-
row, from the ground;
Here a happy group is gathered round the altar lights
of home—
In the shadow of the portal like an evil plotting
gnome
Lurks the outcast son of darkness, envious, defiant. So
Through the shifting scenes upon the stage the
players come and go;
Joy and sorrow, good and evil, dreams and visions,
hopes and fears,
Building and destroying—playing, children of ma-
turer years,
With new toys of faith and fortune, but the same
old smiles and tears!

Now, as in the curling smoke phantasmagoric crea-
tures teem,
Coming nowhence, and nowhither passing from the
embers' gleam,
I discern in some small measure purpose of the drama
scheme.
And as they, who have no substance but in my
ephemeral dream,
May philosophize upon the "actualities of life,"
So the question enters consciousness as trenchant as
a knife:
Who knows but, in space unlocal, there's a Smoker
like to me—
And myself a fleeting figure in the passing pageantry
That within the curling smoke wreathes of his pipe
he loves to see?

JOTTINGS

Modern Magic

Not Bagdad's fabled rug, nor wishing hat
Of Fortunatus, nor Aladdin's lamp
Could dry up seas, lay lofty mountains flat
With half the might of this wee postage stamp.

The Skyscraper

A twelvemonth gone, a gaping pit was here
Where now the builder's massive triumph stands.
How dull is nature, with all time to rear
Her mountains, matched o'er night by human
bands.

The Missing Tense

It seems but yesterday that eager I
Said: "Nothing is, but all things are to be."
Now as I conjugate "to live," "to die,"
Still nothing is—all things have been, for me.

WAYMATES

Over the hills and through the heather,
All in the merry midyear weather—
Under the sky
Of dear July,
Wandering, just we two together.

You and I through the green leafed ways,
You and I in the golden days—
The ways of youth,
The days of truth—
Young life and love and tuneful lays!

Over the hills to the sunset strand,
Over the waves to the wonderland
 Beyond the dim
 And gloaming rim
Of the old gray world go, hand in hand—

Hand in hand (for the dice are thrown),
Heart of my heart, my love, my own—
 Blue sky o'er us
 And before us
Luring lights of the far Unknown.

BY THE ROAD

'Twas an old, old man, and he called to me
 From the roadside where he lay;
And a pitiful sight was this to see
 Of a February day!

On a bank of snow by the roadside bare
 All wearily he reclined,
Like a graven image of grim Despair
 Alone with the keening wind.

He was wan and worn, and his face was seared
 And seamed; but his beggar's rags
I respected not, nor his ice-hung beard,
 Nor Poverty's flapping flags—

For I knew full well who it was that lay
 In extremis by the fence—
And I heard, as I looked and turned away
 And carelessly wended thence,

The silvery note of a mocking laugh
 Down the wood road faintly ring—
'Twas Winter who wearily dropped his staff,
 The laugh was of gleeful Spring!

THE LAST DAYS OF MAY

She is going, merry May—
Speed her on her pastward way!

In her end is naught of tragic—
She has wrought her spell of magic:

Maid of many witching wiles,
Sudden tears and sunny smiles,

Laughing on a hundred hills,
Singing in the running rills,

She has crowned the land with cheer,
After winter doubly dear.

Now her joyous course is run,
All her glad, green work is done—

Down the vista of the days'
Sun and shadow checkered ways

She will pass with tears and laughter—
Who is this, that cometh after?

'Tis herself—made doubly fair
In her daughter's beauty rare;

Speed we May, who goeth soon!
Greet we gentle, welcome June!

THE PINELANDS OF MONMOUTH

I have scaled the steep of Sussex,
Breasted Greenwood's limpid wave,
Known the wooded Watchung ranges'
Facile moods, or gay or grave;

In the years of budding manhood
I have dreamed a future's dream
On the midland heights of Mercer
Where old Princeton's towers gleam.

From the Hackensack's headwaters
To the bay of Delaware,
From the Hook aspiring seaward
To her western marches fair
I have pilgrimmed Jersey's province
To her uttermost confines—
Knowing last, and holding dearest
Monmouth's fairyland of pines.

I have heard the hymn of labor
From her swarming cities rise,
Heard the softer notes and sweeter
Of her songbirds greet the skies;
I have seen white winter mantle
Wondrously her fertile fields,
And the suns of summer urge them
To most opulent of yields:

Fruit and grain, and luscious berries
Of her tropic tempered south,
And the royal melon, making
Heaven of a human mouth.
She is rich beyond all dreaming,
Dowered past all States is she—
And the fairest of her gems is
Monmouth's pineland, by the sea.

Monmouth's pineland! Words of magic
And of melody compound!
There's the lave of lispings waters
Running through their mellow sound;
Song of Whippoorwill's weird music
As of silver litten nights
Plaining in the woodland arches
He conducts his pagan rites.

Beauty, wed with wealth of power—
Melody with might made one,
As beyond the eastern gateway
Restless tides of ocean run.
And the salt gale of Atlantic,
Mingling with the pine breath free,
Sings through Monmouth's open temple
In the pinelands by the sea!

MEADOW FIRES

Dry ceremented, rustling ghosts
Of summer people of the marsh—
How mercilessly mow their hosts,
With gatling fire, the fall winds harsh!

What memories of summer cling
About these senile, nodding stalks;
What echoes of the midyear ring,
Knellwise, where reaper Autumn walks.

A shudder through the ragged ranks—
Some premonition of a fate
Shall shatter all their sad phalanx—
A murmur: "Patience, brothers; wait!"

The day flows uneventful by,
The sable sea of night its end.
With dark, a stir—a reedy sigh,
A thousand whispers: "Courage, friend!"

A roar upon the expectant air,
A clanking as of some huge chain
A fettered giant shakes—and there,
Across the meadows, speeds a train.

A comet hurtling through the dark,
A human laden meteor
That, fiery flashing, spark on spark,
Leaves trail across the meadow floor.

A coal has fallen 'mid the reeds;
It flickers—wonders: "Live, or die?"
They minister its feeble needs—
The throw is won: "'Tis come," they cry.

"'Tis come!" The joyous cry of them
Amens the prayer of waiting days.
Red fingers clutch at each dry stem;
They lean, enraptured, to the blaze.

THE DISTRESSED POET FINDS BUT TO LOSE AGAIN MONEY LOST IN A GRAVEYARD

Here in the silent city of the dead,
Thin snow-dust flying
Through sibilant bare branches overhead,
I found it lying
When, like an old man derelict abed,
The year was dying.

In all that wilderness of brown and white
As day was going,
Outborne upon the billowed front of night,
The waif winds' blowing
Revealed it, single isle of green in sight
And scanty showing.

It danced and dallied on the airy wave,
This lone, unlyric
Lost atom wafted from some pocket cave,
With motions Pyrrhic—
Then caught upon a bush beside a grave,
Oh, fate satiric!

I, fortune's football, hailed it: "Warmth and bread,
Destiny's shaper!"
And reached—like some live thing it fled,
On breeze a-caper:

Lost in the silent city of the dead,
Waste bit of paper!

GREEN BUD AND BROWN LEAF

In April's prime I saw upon a bough
Wherethrough spring's vital juice went coursing
clear,
Ecstatic harbinger of June days near,
With buddage of fruition's vernal vow—
Green wavelets curling from the rapid prow
Of Flora's breeze borne barque—all brown and
sere,
One lonely, lingering leaf of yesteryear:
And he himself was once as they are now!

Green bud—and ichor of the round year's youth!
Broad leaf—and mystery of sun and shade,
With fellowship of light and air and song!
The green leaf, dreaming on the edge of truth—
The brown leaf, reminiscent and dismayed:
And green to brown, a wondrous way, not long!

UP SPEAKS THE MINOR POET

Sir Critic, you have held the lists too long!
Deem not that we, the minor singing horde,
Your tinselled buckler dread, your wooden sword,
With Falstaff swagger brandished. Whistling thong
Were fitter to your hand—and back! You wrong.
With sneering at a calendar explored
Too well, and foregone voices ill restored,
The candlebearers at the fane of song!

Think not for mercy at your hands we plead!
We pity you, instead, in whose dim sight
The lesser luminaries of the night
Are placeless all. The robin hath indeed
His friends, not less than lark and nightingale—
Though of the dizzy heights of song he fail!

THE SPADE

Hephæstuswise was forged my broad steel blade,
As keen and bright and to its mission true
As any sword that warrior e'er drew
When love's and honor's proving he essayed
In chivalry's proud lists. My helve was made
From some old forest monarch's heart, that grew
Long, silent years to meet the sky: deem you
'Tis but a humble part that I have played?

List, then: I helped a sturdy pioneer
With Axe, my brother, tame the wilderness—
And where I once, beside the plundered wave,
Hid golden booty for a buccaneer
A buried city brought to light; and—yes,
When he who made me died, I dug his grave!

THE WAVE

Coursing the skybound sea,
Under the sea of sky,
This is the song of me—
Ocean wayfarer, I!

Child of the brooding deep,
Born of the wind's desire,
Swift into life I leap,
Lord of a wide empire.

Glad in the garish light,
Light is the heart of me;
And all the stars of night
Crown me with mystery.

Roving leviathan
Rests on my lulling breast,
Ships at the will of man
Keel-rend my crystal crest—

Yield to the onward urge,
Or, making gallant fight,
Match against hostile surge
Steam might with ocean might.

I may not gain the shore,
Two hundred leagues away,
Join in the coastal war,
Pass in a pall of spray.

Mine is the lesser gift;
Yet with the whole to merge,
Ever the lilting lift,
Ever the forthright urge!

Under the sea of sky,
Coursing the skybound sea,
Ocean wayfarer, I,
This is the song of me.

THE SINGING LIFE

A clear song, a cheer song,
When life is in its spring;
With long thoughts, and strong thoughts.
And will to high endeavor;
A song of love and hope,
When birds are on the wing—
A song of hope and love,
And faith for the forever.

A sweet song, full, strong,
When life is in its prime;
A light heart, a right heart,
A sturdy heart of oak.
A sweet song, full, strong,
A deep toned summer chime;
A high aspiring spirit,
And a shoulder to the yoke.

A brave song, a grave song,
When life is in its fall;
A song of ripened harvests,
Of autumn's calm repose;
Of old days, the gold days,
Fled now beyond recall,
While drawing to the boundless deep
Full tide the river flows.

A grave song, a brave song,
To speed the waning year,
When winter o'er a weary world
Proclaims his empery;
A pure faith, a sure faith,
A faith to banish fear—
Farewell, the landlocked river! Now,
Godspeed across the sea!

CICADIAN INVITATION

I've heard again the locust's song —
Beginning faint, then rising strong
And setting all the air a-thrill
To its insistent piping shrill:
The first this summer! From a tree
Across the way he called to me—
The call of summer, clear and strong:
I've heard again the locust's song.

Away with books! I will no more
Their dreary, dusty pages pore.
Far in some cool, sequestered nook,
On grassy bank of crooning brook,
Through green embowering canopies
Disparted by the wanton breeze
I'll watch across the azure sky
Dream laden cloud flotillas ply.

Or by some mountain lakelet's verge
Where, imitating ocean's surge,
With Lilliputian mimic charge
Wee plashy wavelets lap the marge
And roll the pebbles in their shock
As ocean grinds his rugged rock—
I'll lie beside the water's edge
And list the lispings of the sedge.

Lone wandering the winding ways,
Through pasture land where kine at graze
Untended crop lush grasses cool
Or rest knee deep in shallow pool,
I'll wade the daisies' golden sea
And watch the constant questing bee
A-cruise, bold buccaneering rover,
For precious plunder of the clover.

I've heard the locust's song today—
The summer's first! It seemed to say:
"The crooning brook, the lakelet blue,
The fields and woodland wait for you.
Why linger in the city, fool,
When country lanes are near and cool?"
I've heard the locust's song today—
A luring lilt—and I'll away!

WAYFELLOWS

Fadeth the day's light;
Long shadows, creeping,
Vanguard the near night—
Night time's for sleeping!

Gray grows the wide way,
Dim in the gloaming;
Greet we yon inn's ray—
Weary of roaming.

Through thin and through thick,
Wet way or dusty,
Thou and I, old stick,
Tried friends and trusty,

In winter's dark hours
Worldwide have wandered,
Summertime, 'tween showers,
Sunlit days squandered.

Through thick and through thin,
Brother and brother,
Nor needing more kin,
Each, than the other,

Year out and year in,
Highway and byway,
One way has aye been
Your way and my way.

Up hill and down dale,
Foul or fine weather—
Blow fair or blow gale,
We two together

Took what the gods sent,
Equally sharing;
Where'er the road went,
High hearted faring.

Fadeth the day's light;
Long shadows, creeping,
Herald the near night—
Night time, for sleeping!

I WILL STAND FAST

I have fared through the fields in November,
Through the broad, brown fields of ripe autumn,
And heard with a sense beyond senses
Murmurous echoes attending

The ebb of the year's high tide.
I have lain, wander weary,
Lain on the dusky, the warm, bared bosom
Of welcoming earth, while the wine,
The rich essence of autumn,
Upyielded soul of exhilarant airs of November,
Tawny, and taking its amber lit tintage
From root tapped soil and the long ranked hosts of
 the corn shocks,
Ran, fluid fire, through my bodily being,
With runes of the year's decadence—
Strange mingling of memories and voices prophetic,
Singing with prosody mellow, in strain antiphonic,
Triumphantly singing, recessional, swelling again to
 strong climax,
A chant of the past and the end not far,
Palingenesis brooding beyond.
I have roamed the still fields in November,
And myself am attuned with the harvest,
Ripe for the Reaper am I.

I have wandered the woods in November,
I have fared like a hero Valhallan:
He, fired with the foam crested mead cup,
And I with the distillate colors,
The red and the flaming yellow,
The bronzes and Puritan russets of autumn—
With isolate remnants of lingering vernal verdure.
I have danced in the leaves a-rustle,
My city thoughts rustling from me
As flutter the foliage flocks:
I have flung my arms like the branches abroad,
The supplicant arms of the oak tree,
Yearning to grasp the Creator;
Yearning un-potent, not futile.
I have heard the mad winds go by,
The rush and the gallop of otherworld horses,
Couriers heralding winter that ride
Driving the green hosts before them,

And whooping up wind wolves behind—
The soul of the wind has possessed me,
Restless, forever at seek:
I will arise in its strength and its passion,
I will go forth to my quest.

I have stood by the sea in November,
Stood fast where the sea pack leaps frothing,
Held hard on the leash but leaping,
And storming the unshaken strand.
I have stood on the glittering shingle
And felt all the strength of the earth
Come subtly with alchemy creeping
Till my uttermost corporal atom
Was charged with the permeant currents
Of soul continental, unyielding.
And I am a continent—I
Am a shore where the waves of an ocean,
Mysterious, limitless, grand,
Come charging and breaking—retreating,
Back beaten, forever defeated,
Forever new armed:
With the strength of a continent in me,
I will stand fast to the end.

WHAT IS FRIENDSHIP?

First, mutual need, the magnet power
That draws the errant bee to the flower;
Outgive and intake balancing then,
As earth takes the seed and yields again;
Doubling of joys and halving of cares,
Friendship's dividend carrying shares,
As song in echo interest bears;
Mutual need and mutual troth,
Far as may be from the star-and-moth;
Complement natures, like brook and banks,
Birdsong and leafshade, giving and thanks;
Faith and faithworthiness—here, my friend,
Is friendship's creed, beginning and end.

ALL-IN-ALL

I am the soul of the sighing breeze,
The sweet of the summer shower;
I live in the leafy lisp of trees,
The ecstasy of the flower.

I am the fire of the solar light,
The stir in the bud at blow;
I am the spirit of brooding night,
The spell of the star dust's glow.

I am the wrath of the rushing gale,
The weight of the wave am I;
My might is known in the lightning's flail
And the thunder's threatful cry.

The light am I of the lover's dream,
The pulse of the poet's song,
The gray philosopher's pregnant theme,
The hope of the common throng.

The strength of the toiler's arm am I,
The planner's divine desire;
Above the red field of war I fly,
I burn in the altar fire.

In me, the strength of man's endeavor,
The courage of woman's pain;
I am the Now in the Forever,
As in your "loss" I am gain.

Of living, of time and space and star
I am the source and the goal;
All beings within my being are:
The circumferential Soul!

THE LITTLE OLD LADY WHO LOOKED UP THE ROAD

They built her of broomsticks and shaped her with
straw

(Just two little mischievous lads),
The dearest old lady that ever you saw
(Great larks for two fun loving tads!);
They clothed her with garments long since out of
mode,

The Little Old Lady Who Looked Up the Road.

She stood in a corner beside the front fence
(And how the bypassers did stare!),
One hand raised to shade her eyes, gazing intense
(“She seems half alive, I declare!”),
Daylong, with an earnestness seldom bestowed,
The Little Old Lady Who Looked Up the Road.

The days came and went, and the seasons flew by
(With two little lads growing fast),
And springtime or autumn, wet weather or dry
(How swiftly one’s boyhood is past!),
Still, whether men garnered or whether men sowed,
The Little Old Lady Looked Straight Up the Road.

The wind and the rain and the sunshine of years
(Now one of the lads wandered wide)
She bore with the patient endurance of seers
(The other, his brother, had died),
And whether it blossomed or whether it snowed,
The Little Old Lady Still Looked Up the Road.

One day there was noise and confusion within
(The home of the two lads, you know);
“We’re moving away,” said a voice in the din
(An echo of one long age)—
And then, as the van creaked away with its load,
The Little Old Lady Looked, Sad, up the Road.

What was it she looked for, so long and in vain?
(The lad who had wandered came home.)
Deserted, who knows all her story of pain?
("Now hence nevermore shall I roam.")
And truly he paid all the debt that he owed
The Little Old Lady Who Looked Up the Road.

"Henceforth nevermore shall her lot be neglect!"
(He said to his own little lads.)
Now, rejuvenated and gaily bedecked
(Great larks for two fun loving tads!),
Rejoices again in her foretime abode
The Little Old Lady Who Looks Up the Road.

DISGUISES

Ere yet my youth was spent,
With all the fire of youth
I vowed: "I'll see the world,
And seek the utter truth!"

Beneath transparent masks
Their secret selves I traced,
And dreamed that mirth was false
And joy was double faced.

"Mirth's but a mask," I said,
"Ill veiling lines of pain."
And laughter but, I thought,
A rainbow—tears, the rain.

Honor and love I sought.
They came. I learned—too late—
Disgrace is honor's twin,
And love lives near to hate.

Some time I dwelt with grief,
Drained sorrow's bitter grail;
And lo! I learned these are
But sympathy's thin veil.

I fraternized with want,
And wisdom came to me;
Unmasked I knew the sprite
For gentle charity!

Now youth is spent, and age
Dispels the dreams of youth,
Good in all ill I find
So doubled faced is truth!

THE SHIP THAT WAS

The Dream of the Designer

Come, let us build us a vessel,
A marvel of strength and of speed,
Fit with the wild winds to wrestle
And bid the mad billows take heed:
The winds and the waves
Her minist'ring slaves.

Aye, she shall have full dominion
And empery over the seas—
Speed of the gull on sure pinion,
Leviathan's power—and these
Shall cause her to reign
Supreme on the main.

She shall be queen of the waters,
Magnificent, regal, divine;
Fairest of Neptune's fair daughters,
Unrivalled, superlative. Shine,
Hospitable suns,
On her as she runs.

The Builders

Hark! The ring of the axeman's stroke
Echoing through the woodland wide;

Prostrate, o'ertaken in his pride,
Bole and bough, lies the stubborn oak.

Subterranean toilers bore
Deep in the ferrous heart of earth;
Delving they drain its dearest worth,
Tapping the riches at its core.

Gleam and glow like the mouth of hell;
Sweltering devils grope and reel,
Feeding the frenzied flame—and steel
Comes to furnish the ship a shell.

By the side of the sea men toil,
Laying the keel and ribs a-true,
Skill be theirs to the line to hew!
Who malingers, may God assoil!

The Launching

Creature of a hundred climes,
A hundred minds, ten thousand hands,
Thou mayst own allegiance to
One flag, but folk of many lands
Trusting in thy staunchness rest:
Be true, all humankind commands.

Thrilling like a sentient thing,
The mighty vessel leaves the ways.
Eager for her element,
Rejoicing in the coming days;
For her worthiness, to Him,
The God of mariners, be praise!

The Voyage Begun

"All ashore that's going ashore!"
The last farewells are said,
And they who go and they who stay
Are one and all godsped:

God speed the good ship on her way
Across the ocean bed!

The final hawser is cast off,
Her flags the dull air spurn,
Her eager engines urge the screws
That insolently churn
The laggard wave. May she, and hers,
Thus joyously return!

The Warning

Now who are these that impiously
My suzerainty defy?
Bold race of mortals! Have ye not
Full oft my vengeance seen?
Why thus in false security
My salt dominions ply?
If former lessons be forgot,
This one shall teach, I ween!

“Your faring fathers spread the sail,
But ye have harnessed steam.
Their bleaching bones my dooryard pave—
And hold ye yours so cheap
To risk them thus? Ye brave the gale
And insolently deem
Your craft immune from storming wave
And terrors of the deep.

“Ye reckless ones that challenge fate,
And challenge me, too bold!
I give ye warning yet once more—
If ye are wise, give ear,
Lest ye my wrath shall underrate
And, learning, perish: *Hold!*
Ye men may rule beyond my shore,
But I am master here!”

The Wreck

The night is clear, the starlight 'lumes the lane,
The ocean greyhound blithely cleaves the main.
The Sabbath day is ending, and the throng
On board are busy, some with sacred song,
And some with thoughts less other-world—but none
Has foresight keen and sure enough to run
A single hour ahead and read the fate
In ambush for the vessel and her freight,
So weak is mortal vision.—*What was that?*
“Why, nothing serious. Let's have our chat,
And then turn in.—A berg? It cannot be—
But anyway, the boat is certainly
Unsinkable.”—Another hour, and see;
A mighty ship, sore wounded unto death,
And hundreds who will nevermore draw breath,
A cityful of men and women drowned;
A score frail boats with precious cargo, bound
For no port but—whatever may be found,
With chance as pilot. Happened, chance was kind
(Might just as well have not been so inclined!)
And so the castaways were rescued.—Mind,
How poor a thing is life when one survives
The sudden snuffing out of loved ones' lives!—
A hundred names of heroes to enroll
On heroism's honored, crowded scroll.

Envoi

Enough! What boots it us to dwell
Upon that scene—transplanted hell?
The widows and the orphans know
How streams of sympathy can flow,
How kind the world is (when our woe
Has roots that reach beyond our ken
Into the lives of myriad men);
And we are not the first to learn
That fires of martyrdom can burn
In humbler as in haughty hearts

And stokers, stewards, play their parts
With selfishness as good to scan
As any heart of gentleman.
The dead—are dead; but we who live
And to their deeds true honor give
Learn life's too high a price for speed:
The lesson grows of noble seed,
And sown in precious soil indeed;
And sadly in this saddest hour
We learn the limits of man's power.

TO A TRUE FRIEND

I found you lying in the woods,
My nut brown briar bowl,
And you were musty but "the goods"
(For smokers of pipes talk *négligé*)—
By a path where I strolled of an autumn day.
Nestled in old dead leaves you lay,
Looking as brown and dead as they;
And he was poor of soul
Who, breaking your bit in his awkward way
Cast you off—but you patient lay
Till I came carelessly wending by
With a vagrom foot and a roving eye
And happened you there in the muck to spy,
My fosterling brown bowl!

Now those there be who'd have rather died,
My nut brown briar bowl,
Than turn from the beaten path aside
To pick you up—'tis a silly pride
That o'erleaps the goods the gods provide
And sneers at wayside dole;
But bulletin it in Philistine Gaith,
I gladly turned from the too strait path:
What a warm, ripe gleam thy round side hath,
My beautiful brown bowl!

For under the mould on your swelling round,
My cherished mottled bowl,
I saw that your stuff was sweet and sound,
And knew that a treasure had been found:
And now the gleaming coal
Of the fragrant leaf that, crinkling, glows
Just south of my titillated nose
Is teeming with dreaming of southland skies
Where glowing and growing the warm field lies,
While generous juices in sap veins run
And the rich leaf mellows beneath the sun;
It has not found its goal
Till mate with you, brown bowl!

Remember the wonderful nuptial night—
Your second, hard old bowl?
When I was priest and drew up tight
The wedlock bond, while your constant light
And incense wreathes upstole,
And we quaffed, to the bride Nicotia's health
Deep of the warm grape's ruby wealth;
Not as the wooers who win by stealth,
Nor those who take cheap toll
And run—but confident, bold
As the salt beard Vikings of old
We lit the flame of a great desire
And deep in the red core of its fire
We sealed the pledge of a sacred troth
Inviolat, sure, till upon us both
Time's breath blow chill and his dog, decay,
Pitiless gnawing and gnawing away,
Turn the red of your poll
Like the black of mine to an ashen gray
(We figure it, smoking, every day
In pantomime grave as our hearts are gay),
My stark old briar bowl!

AT THE TURN OF THE TIME TIDE

Daylong the countless cohorts of the snow
Have marched from leaden sallyports, in skies
That face with frowning front a world that lies
In sullen, buttressed bivouac below—
Soft, unremittent as the minutes' flow,
Resistless as old Ocean's tidal rise—
Till wide the white flag of surrender flies;
While sand by sand the year's last moments go.

The last night of the year! O wondrous night,
Mysteriously populous with ghosts,
With haunting voices that may not be stilled
More mystically vocal. Soft winged flight
Of dead days' disembodied homeless hosts,
Mute wraiths of dreams and visions unfulfilled!

The midnight strikes: it is the time tide's turn,
The old year passes, and the old year's pain.
As mariners who from an unknown main
Make happy issue leave their fears astern
And steer their battered bark with sole concern
For port, and fruit of their pelagic pain,
So we, whose quest is for a nobler gain,
Dismiss the old and to the new year yearn.

The first morn of the year! O wondrous morn,
Bright leader of the days' procession, blest
With opulence of promise, hope and all
The high resolve of youth—O year reborn,
Reborn ourselves we turn us from the west
Of setting suns—we heed thine Orient call!

FELLOWSHIP

These things I saw upon a summer day:
A brook that loved and lingered by a flower;
A bird on bough that gave song thanks for shower

Of sun; slow sailing the cerulean way,
And brightly twinned upon the nether bay,
A single cloud craft; and, with day's last hour,
A lonely coast where rugged rocks gave dour
Resistance to the waves, with smoke of spray.

Such fellowship I found in nature—each
Bound up in all, and all in each—the high
Creation epic woven rune by rune
In cloud and shadow, yearning wave and beach—
Quotidian thaumaturgy of the sky,
And restless tides that follow on the moon.

THE DIVER

*Stout panoplied in metal guise,
Armored and helmed so knightlywise,
Whither goest thou, Diver?
"Into the gloom of a living grave
Full forty fathom 'neath the wave!"
God go with thee now, Diver !*

Rattle of chains over the side—
Into the waiting, wicked tide,
Into the deep, the Diver!
Pay out the line—send air, more air—
God knows he'll need it, buried there:
Safe may He keep the Diver!

Up comes the Diver, the man-fish.
What savest thou, Diver, there?
A drownèd ship I saw, and through
Her wounded sides a ghastly crew
Of sad-eyed sailormen stare—
Thank God for the sound of voices,
But most of all for the air!

I've heard full many a silence,
In many a lonely place—
The desert and the mountain top;

But try a forty fathom drop
Through yonder watery space,
And, take my word for it, comrade—
There you'll see God face to face!"

HERE AND HEREAFTER

High hearted seekers after truth, most rare
And radiant goal that lures ambition's eyes,
Are they who count this world's best gains nowise
Commensurate with cost; hold wisdom fair,
Scale the bleak heights of thought and, 'stablished
there,

Yet higher yearn. Alas, the elusive prize!
Pursued the more, the more the vision flies,
And they who highest grope grasp empty air.

Yet oft who seemeth vanquished nobly wins!
Ofttimes alone, despairing in the night,
Sees failure's front revealed transformed, di-
vine.

Where baffled reason halts, there faith begins.
The darkest shadow surest proves the light,
And doubt obscures that faith may clearer
shine.

Suppose one prisoned in a hollow sphere,
Of vast extent, ensealed, within whose bound
'Tis freely his to move; will he not sound
Its uttermost extent, deem freedom drear,
And covet the unknown beyond the sheer
Impenetrable walls that hedge him round,
And conjure terrors that himself confound,
Of cruel tyranny, and doubt, and fear?

So prisoned are we all! So we have thought
Ourselves oppressed; so we have drunk despair,
Our dreams of conquest turned to dust; have
lain
In fetters that our silly selves have wrought,

Inert; with unavailing (unfaithed) prayer,
With senseless questionings and needless pain.

When lawless lust and every noxious weed
Uprearing baneful growths of want and woe
In social slime offend your sense, then know
That want is charity's thin mask, that need
Is opportunity disguised. Well heed
Lest, thus unveiled, you pass them by, for so
Salvation slips! Deem self the one dread foe,
And simple brotherhood enough of creed.

Grasp immortality while yet thou art
Of earth; our deeds it is that never die;
Theirs, immortality of influence.
Who serves his fellow men with fearless heart,
And ready hand, shall with unclouded eye
Foreview his way when he departeth hence.

THE LAST HOMECOMING OF MAYOR GAYNOR

Wild spirit of the wave,
Troubled soul of the sea,
Hold in the leash your hounds,
White lipped billows that leap,
A frothing and foaming pack,
Taking up, eager and hot, the trail of the har-
rowing keel.

Over a watery plain at peace,
Calm in its outward mien as in still, inscrutable
deeps,
Bear softly, bear safe the funeral ship that comes,
Bringing him home.

Soul of the wind,
Restless, vengeful wanderer over the earth,
Stay in mercy thy hand, heavy in smiting—
Hold aloof the ravishing gale,

Forth send the most mild of thy messenger troop,
Zephyrs that whispering run upon the waters;
Let them hitherward waft,
Borne thistle light on kindly favoring airs
But clear as a vesper bell, unmistakably kind,
The well wishes, fresh coined in opulent friendship's
mint,
The grief sharing and ministering urge of brothers
over the sea,
As he comes home,
Home to his people.

Now, Lusitania, queen of wide waters,
Fearing not wind nor wave,
Rival, in man made beauty and might,
Of them, the fruits and the tools of Divine machi-
nation,
Sail proudly, yet with humility,
Knowing the nature, noble and rare, of this thy
consecrate freight;
All that is left of a man,
Envelope mortal and mean of a soul immortal and
great.
'Tis hero's clay in thy keeping,
And the trust is a holy trust.
A sorrowing city waits,
A mother with eyes of sadness that yearn to the
harbor,
And on, with the penetrant vision of mothers
Whose sons fare far waters,
On to the distant main where thou, Lusitania, far-
est hereward with speed,
Bringing him home to the city, the mother bereft,
dolorosa;
Bringing him home.

Winds and the waves, be kind —
Be kind to the hurrying vessel
That bears to the city her son,

Lest her grief grow with waiting,
Foresuffering keenly the pangs
Of a sorrowful homecoming,
The mother's desire to be alone with her dead.
Bring him home!

WAYWISE AND FOOTFREE

Oh, what if a friend plays traitor,
And what if a lover's false?
When frowneth the front of Fate or
The foot of minx Fortune halts—
Why, then, the man who's a man in each part of
him,
Head of him, hand of him, heart of him—
End as the start of him—
Scorning Fortune, the flirt,
Hideth his hurt.

Serene in the battle's losing,
As calm if he wins his fight,
Whatever the gods send choosing
(So making his own their might)
Undismayed, unafraid, gives he the flower of him;
Faithfully to the last hour of him
With all the power of him,
Flatfoot, face to the front,
Beareth life's brunt.

And, whether the day be sunny
Or whether the way be dark,
Be hemlock his cup or honey,
A tragedy or a lark,
Always he knows as he goes, in the soul of him—
Surely he knows in the whole of him
That no control of him
Hath Fate: unmastered aye
Goeth his way.

THE MARSHLANDS

Oh, the marshlands of New Jersey,
Oh, the broad moors near the sea,
Where the salt winds off the ocean
Wander far and fast and free.

Oh, the tides in winding channels
Hidden in the meadow grass,
Where with hulls unseen, ghost vessels,
Gliding schooners bayward pass;

And the nodding and the lipping
Of the zephyr haunted sedge,
And the mallows' flaming petals
On the sluggish ditch's edge;

And the meadow lark, sky scaler,
Mounting up on tiny wings,
Flooding upper space with music—
Largesse free, but fit for kings;

And the fleecy flocks of cloudland,
Browsing o'er their sunny leas,
And the flitting of their shadows,
Playing with each vagrant breeze.

Oh, the brave life of the marshes,
Jersey's moorlands, green and wide;
And the brotherhood that crowns it,
Blowing wind and flowing tide.

AT PRINCETON JUNCTION

Due east and west the iron highway lies
Where pass and pass again fleet trains that seem
Mere shifting phantom figures of a dream;
And north, beyond the fair wide valley, rise
Low hills whereon the college towers gleam.

O'er height and open valley is dispread
The languor of a summer afternoon—
The drowsy, purpled stillness of late June;
Warm zephyrs wander lightly overhead,
Responsive hums the wires' Aeolian tune.

Here on the bank beside the shimm'ring track
Traced by the railroad's overhanging haze.
I lounge, alone. 'Twas thus in other days—
Ah, me, how musing memory calls them back!—
A college youth, I trod these pleasant ways.

'Twas thus, I say—and yet not wholly thus,
For one there was most constant at my side,
A college mate—ah, God, the foolish pride
That broke the happy bond and parted us,
To drift and drift apart, while friendship died.

He wanders far among the towns of men,
While me the old, familiar places know—
Wide worlds apart our divers currents flow;
Yet, sure am I that they will cross again
As up and down the busy world we go.

What changes will attend the passing years?
Will alchemy of time transmute the old
Alloy of baser metal to pure gold?
And which will be fulfilled—my hopes? My
fears?
And what the sequel when the tale is told?

The passing trains are phantoms of a dream;
To me, this drowsy afternoon,
The wires sing a sad, threnodic tune—
Across the valley Princeton's towers gleam
And, surely, hope is fitter far for June!

JACK

You ask accommodation, stranger? Say—
I ain't no grouch, but then, it's jest this way:
You come a-steaming up in that big car
O' yourn—dod blast the thing! You've travelled
far,
Got far to go, an' ask me for the night
To put you up. It ain't my style—not quite!—
To grudge a traveller a bed an' snack,
But—stranger, say: I hain't forgot our Jack!

Who's Jack? Oh, jest a leetle yaller cur—
But my gal loved him, an' we both loved her,
We shore did, stranger! Mary died aged seven,
Jest sort o' went to find her ma in heaven,
An' left me an' Jack—jest him an' me.

Jack—cutest little pup you ever see,
Bright as a button, busy as a bee,
An' everythin' I'd left in God's big world—
Come limpin' in one summer afternoon an' curled
Up in my arms—you never *see* such eyes!
I done the best I knowed how, doctorwise,
Tied up the bleedin' paw—big tourin' car
Had done it—then, jest prayed an' waited. Far
Inter the night I held him. Then I saw
Poor Jack was swellin'—for 'twa'n't jest the paw,
Like I'd be'n hopin'; Jack was hurt inside,
Injured internal, like. Midnight, he died.
But I'm a-keepin' you. Well, I—*shot—Jack!*
Then, somehow; suthin' hit me; things went
black.

Next day—right over there by yonder tree—
I digged another grave; there—don't you see,
Three graves a-row? An' this yere cabin's mine.
Folks call me Crazy Bill, an' I opine
They'm not so fur off. Mighty out o' date,
A-thinkin' dogs has souls! It's gittin' late,

An' I don't believe there's no use stoppin' here,
Stranger. It sorter seems like I don't keer
Fur company, fur somehow—I'm sort o' queer!

THE SEVENTH EDWARD OF ENGLAND

I

'Tis midnight by old, storied Thames;
Beneath black bridges arching o'er
Its leaden tide from shore to shore
No burdened craft of commerce stems
The river wrapped in mystery
Seeking its ancient love, the sea,
Its goal for countless ages more—
Aye, till upon its either bank
(Where ebbs and flows the human tide,
Men meeting here from far and wide,
Live shuttles intricately plied—
And palaces of royalty
And halls and marts of art and trade,
Where destinies are marred and made,
Rise grandly rank by serried rank)
The race is dead, its glory fled,
Its volumed annals all unread,
Those thick walls formless wood and stone,
And the reft river runs alone.

II

'Tis midnight by the Thames; and herding out
From palaces of pleasure, garish-gay,
With laugh and merry quip the babbling rout
Swarms volubly, with gossip of the play,
Though now and then the graver minds: "They
say
The King is critically ill; no doubt
A nervous rumor, sprung to life to-day—
To-morrow's news will spread the truth about."

'Tis midway of the murky London night,
And homeward hastes the weather scolding
throng;
In Mammon's temples dies the luring light,
Dead are the echoes of the play and song.
Deep in the city shadows Man-Gone-Wrong
Slinks forth in quest of prey; has none insight
Into that pregnant future that ere long
Shall high and low in common grief unite?

There is unease upon the midnight air,
A sudden sense that unknown ill impends;
As one who subtly dreads a blow unfair,
Although surrounded by supposed friends.
With strange new note that sharply ill portends,
The newsboy hawking his belated ware:
"Within the hour the King's life ends!"—
Dread prophecy, convincing to despair!

III

Hark!
In the dark
And the silence between the days
The knell
Of the bell
Where near the Cross on the dome it sways!
How it falls
From St. Paul's
Cathedral tower
At this solemn hour—
The deep, full note of a nation's grief,
To rise and swell
Into wondrous power
And compass beyond belief:
Passing the bounds of the homeland wide—
Over seas
To the colonies,
To tell

The folk at the world's far side
That a king, a king of men has died!

IV

Men in the city who hear its beat
Pause in the gloom of the rain swept street,
Turn blanched faces to those at their side:
"The King—it means our brave King has died!"
The mother, out of her light sleep roused,
Thinks first of her man child safely housed;
Her hand to the bedside crib outsteals,
A-pulse with joy as the babe it feels:
"Thy father, my son, is spared to us—
God help the poor Queen afflicted thus;
In Him is the widow's comfort!" Aye,
Up from the hospital's cots a cry
Forthwells from hearts that have dwelt with pain,
A prayer from those who pray not in vain
For the King who died—and the new King's reign.
At morn the children with bated breath
Will ask of the mystery of death
And learn that on mankind one and all,
On king and commons, on great and small,
The same dark shadows of sorrow fall.

V

O manly life! O kingly end!
Not less the man when more the king!
Thy triple virtues who shall sing,
As husband, father, and as friend—
And more than each, than all of these,
As that "Good Guardian"—thus thy name—
Who ruled a nation's destinies
And cherished well the altar flame
Of England's weal? With Alfred and the other
great
Wise helmsmen of her Ship of State
In letters of immortal gold

Emblazoned on her glory's shield
Must Albion place, nor ever yield,
The name of her last Edward—he
Who served less long than faithfully;
Who, never called to war's red field,
Was among statesmen high enrolled;
Loved peace, with honor; caring naught
For vain pretensions, wisely wrought
For happiness in English homes,
Wherever England's banner streams;
Who kept alight and burning bright
The lamp of learning; nourished arts,
Gave trade and science their due parts,
With equal handed care—laid siege
But to his countrymen's brave hearts,
And, conquered, held them surely liege!

VI

The King, the King is dead! God save the King,
his son,
And may his lifeway nobly as his great sire's run!

AFTER READING LONGFELLOW

Not as the meteor whose flaming car
With rebel fury vaunts inutile might
Athwart the startled heavens: such a light
As from a coastal headland ranges far:
Or as the glow of some calm, holy star
Abiding on the altarpiece of night,
Unjealous of the censers' lifted light—
Content, and patient as the planets are.

He looked, clear eyed, into his heart, and wrote.
He shot his arrow songs, and found a friend
Where'er they fell. Not his the elfin flute,
The martial trumpet. His the organ's note,
That builds melodic mountains—at the end
Majestic echoing in hearts born mute.

OF POE ENVYING THE ANGEL ISRAFEL

Strange progeny of chance and choice—rude sire
And dam of destinies, ignobly joined—
To purge his baser metal be purloined
A precious spark of pure Promethean fire
And spun his soul in one ecstatic wire
Whose vibrant yearnings were in music coined
That conjured dim cathedrals, arched and groin-
ed:
With cynic gargoyles on each airy spire.

Could he have dwelt where Israfel made mute
The singing spheres with envy of his art,
Had it been joy or sorrow to discern
Still fairer, further worlds—a wilder lute,
The organ of some hotter kindled heart,
That storms the stars with melody supern?

NOTES

The Daily Newspaper

Like some deep lying lake among the hills
Whereunto pour the universal rills,
It holds the candid mirror to our gaze
And bids us frankly view our works and ways.

Love

Is it a taper at a holy shrine,
Or fire of fate that lures to death and shame?
Well! Whether it be evil or divine,
'Tis our too eager breath that quells the flame.

Echoes

Our very selves are these, that we have sent
Forth faring in the void of space—but blent
With backborne laughter of ironic sprites;
Each in our quick discomfiture delights.

A MEETING AT THE JUNCTION

Say, boss, I ain't no common tramp,
Though sure at hikin' I'm a champ!
Why, say, this very month I've done
By railroad truck and hoof, if one,
Two thousand mile—a fairish run—
An' where I'll be next week God knows!
The trek bug nips me and I goes.
Been just like that since, when a child,
I had a name for being wild.
Now, take 'em "good" an' take 'em "bad,"
They're nigh enough alike! My Dad,
However—he was ironclad,
Jest sort o' moral muscle bound,
As you might say—he licked me sound,
An' plenty often, too; but Jim,
My younger brother—say, for him
Wa'n't nothin' good enough! A slim,
Tall lad he was—Oh, slim an' slight—
Say! Jest—about—*your* build an' height—
An' womenfolks'd all declare
There never was such angel hair;
It shined like gold; an' then, it curled—
Oh, he was *too* good for *this* world
O' sin! At last, got so I must
Let off some steam, or surely bust.—
Well! Dad (was on his dyin' bed,
They told us) called us in an' said
Some certain things that tickled Jim,
But made me itch to get at him—
An' handed me a partin' scotch
'T slit my well tanned hide. A watch
He'd worn lifelong was legacy
For Jim—a partin' prayer for me!
Well, sir, the two of us no more
'N got outside that solemn door
When I felt somethin' give a snap
Inside o' me.—It wa'n't no scrap,

For I did all the hittin'. Jim,
 When I got through chastisin' him,
 Laid on the floor so pale and still
 'T jest to look give me a chill—
 I wa'n't no Cain 't meant to kill!
 Well, I jest simply up an' goed,
 An' ever sence be'n on the road,
 Footfree.—The next train east? Well, say—
 I don't jest know the time o' day,
 But there's a train that goes that way
 At 3:15, up through the Notch—
 My God! Say—*where'd* you get that watch?
 'Twas give you was it, by your Dad?
 Then, sonny, *I'm your uncle!* Glad
 To meet you! Put it there!—Oh, well,
 Then don't! An' you can *go* to hell,
 Give my sincere regards to Jim—
 You certain sure do favor him!

PRINIUS'S DOG

One of the casts of the Pompeian dead in the catastrophe of 79 A. D., is of "a watch dog forgotten by his ungrateful master, L. Vesonius Prinius, left tied to a chain behind the street door of the house, overtaken by death while lying on his back with outstretched legs."

Eighteen hundred years and more,
 Centuries erelong a score,
 Have the city overpassed
 Since Vesuvian ashes cast,
 And the dust cloud's fateful fall
 O'er Pompeii's homes the pall—
 In unceremented graves,
 Masters cheek by jowl with slaves:
 In level doom,
 One death, one tomb.

Eighteen hundred years are flown
O'er the seared Campanian cone,
Dropping back, Time's falling rain,
To their native sea again;
And again restored to light,
City long of Dreadful Night,
Pompeii, resurrected, lies
Open to the ancient skies:
 Patrolled by hosts
 Of hoary ghosts.

Sudden as the lightning's gleam
Came the belching flame and steam,
Came the slow relentless weight
Of the ash rain—gray garbed Fate;
And the rabble and the rout,
Silenced midbreath mortal shout,
Each one where he might be, died:
How the bodies, scattered wide,
 Beneath the clay
 Outspeak today!

Here lies one who as he fell
Gazed the gaping gates of hell;
Peaceful features hath his neighbor,
Fall'n asleep at quiet labor;
Near, a chiselled Resignation,
The wife who died at her station;
And, more featly graven still
Marvel of Time's telltale skill,
 Not far from her,
 The Prinian cur.

Faithful servant, loyal friend,
Well deserving better end,
Here his form, preserved in plaster,
Tells how ingratly his master
Left him, helpless on his chain.
Through long centuries have lain
There his poor distorted bones

Witless witness, he depones:
"Thus evil, done,
Full course must run."

HAFIZ

When they would clip the nightingale his wings,
Those Hafiz hating Sufis, they were told:
"So fresh, so sweet the songs that Hafiz sings,
They shall be young yet when the world is old!"
Zahid is indistinguishable clay—
I spent an hour with Hafiz yesterday.

For yesterday the page I read grew dim,
And in its place Musella's lyric son,
As long ago by Ruknabad's bright brim—
Again the singing waters live and run,
And thrills the bowered bulbul's ecstasy—
Drew nigh, to dwell a little while with me.

From his dead day to this of soon-to-die
And back again our wordy shuttle went,
And wove on warp of query and reply
Strange web of passing custom and event;
With: "Is it true that dead are love and
song?"
And: "Were they truly in your day so
strong?"

Then he: "They say that now men's god is gold,
That power is their aim, success their creed."
Whereto asked I: "Were men so pure of old
The love they loved to sing knew naught of
greed?"
"Methinks," quoth Hafiz, "men are aye the
same,
And Self their love, whate'er the changing
name."

Silent he mused beside the musing stream,
As one who lives again the crowded past;
Then frowned, then smiled, as in a dappled dream—
When angling I essayed a trial cast:
“Hafiz, what godlike-joyous days were those!”
And he: “Where now the maid, and where the
rose?”

“Was then,” I asked, “the maid so very fair?
The tavern snug? The wine so potent-red?
The nightingale you made immortal there—
Was he so music mad as you have said?
Or would you but, as criticasters hold,
A theologic parable unfold?”

He gazed at me, unutterably sad,
Who witlessly had done him grievous wrong:
“I sang,” said he, “as singeth Ruknabad,
As all the joyous brotherhood of song—
And left the preaching to the Sufis sage!”
Then Hafiz passed—and I resumed the page.

EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN

Upyearning yet earth anchored as the hills
Etern was he,
And musically vocal as the rills’
Glad minstrelsy.

He stood as straight and steadfast as the trees,
Yet as the wind
That stirreth them to wondrous symphonies
Was unconfined.

He was as buoyant hearted as the flowers,
Fruitful as fields
Warm sun and wind have urged, and summer show-
ers,
To tenfold yields.

Now he, bold mariner, is gone before
To "Shadowland;"
And we, who may not yet that way explore,
Pause on the strand—
And, gazing o'er Eternity's wide wave,
Hear, faint but sure,
His calm, familiar voice beyond the grave:
"Dear hearts, endure!"

A PRESIDENT

We loved him, we lost him—
And how shall we spare him?
Must loving be losing?
God knows all the depth of
The love that we bare him!

We need him, we need him—
And now he has left us!
We stand at his graveside
And blindly we wonder
Why God has bereft us.

He wrought for his people—
He loyally wrought for
His people—his people,
All blind to their own good
He sturdily fought for!

One dark day, we cursed him—
And yet he forgave us!
How blindly we turned from
The way *we* had chosen—
He kept it to save us!

We loved him, we lost him—
Thank God that he knew,
Ere he passed the dark portal,
The love that we bore him—
The love, late but true!

THE VISITOR

When the brief day darkly dwindles and the lights
 come twinkling out
In the hiving hills of commerce reared above the
 pavement's rout;
When the workroom is deserted and the clerks are
 hasting home,
Oftentimes I linger, dreaming, as the shadows deep-
 en—roam
('Tis the mind's most boonful magic) far beyond
 the crowded ways
Of the city, down the vista of the backward lying
 days.

Now with Then is strangely wedded, and the years
 that lie between
Are as ghosts that haunt the hallways of old houses,
 dimly seen
In the corridors' gray gloaming. So in swift suc-
 cession flit
Old familiar forms and faces 'thwart the darkness:
 born of it;
Old familiar forms and faces—mazy music, fluting
 low,
And the wistful, wondering gaze of one who loved
 me long ago.

Now the brief day darkly dwindles, and the dreams
 come swarming up.
I, who've brothered with gaunt grief and deeply
 drunk of sorrow's cup
Linger lone among the shadows far above the stri-
 dent street—
Linger lone among the shadows, shadowy visitants
 to greet.
Comes a footstep (with no echo) down the dim,
 deserted hall;
Comes a tap (*you* could not hear it) at the door—
 an eager call.

I have found her, my Beloved! It is Grief that lieth
dead,
She that liveth, mine forever; and the city there dis-
pread,
With its seething population, with its restless tides
that flow,
Yon and hither, human currents vainly surging to
and fro,
Is a dream not half so real as the vision fair I see
When the brief day darkly dwindles and the night
brings Her to me!

THE EVER GRINDING MILLS

Shower of rain and shower of sun—
Soul of the soil, awake!
Walls of the seed cell, break!
Strongly the generous juices run
In earth's full veins; each uttermost one,
Glad in the year's glad morn,
Stirs with a hope new born—
Hope that each germinal fibre thrills,
Passion old as the god of the hills:
God of the hills, etern,
See how thy creatures yearn,
Being but grist for thy grinding mills.

Grist for the mills that grind: from the seed,
Tiniest seed that lies
Waiting the warming skies,
On to the mightiest breathing breed
Mothered of earth—the wheat and the weed,
Man and his brother beast,
Greatest not less than least,
All to be ground as the Maker wills:
Tell us, artificer of the hills,
Are we but, as we seem,
Parts of a living dream—
Dream creatures dreaming the grinding mills?

Grist for the mills: if the grist rebel,
 Bidding the harsh wheel halt;
 Is it the Miller's fault?
Giving us mind was cruel?—Ah, well,
Filling the mind with heaven and hell,
 Giving the soul a voice,
 Dressing up fate as choice
Was perhaps more well meaning than kind:
What if the will and what if the mind
 (Will that forthbrought the plan,
 Mind that it gave to man)
Were themselves—grist for the mills that grind?

Outstreaming sun and down dropping rain—
 Spirit of pregnant earth,
 Praying to give in birth,
Soon thy baptism of exquisite pain!
Tremulous, burning pith of the grain,
 Find in the clod a soul!
 Seek, O my heart, thy goal—
Courage! Look up, look up to the hills!
Conviction comes, and God! how it thrills:
 Incomplete were the scheme
 And imperfect the dream
Save for the grist that feedeth the mills.

THE HERMIT

My pallet to the cave's low portal bear,
And leave me, comrades, for a little there—
Once more to view, ere these limp lids are furled,
The passing panorama of the world.

Oh, prospect wondrous fair! Look ye where wide—
With glebe and greenning garth diversified:
Broad bosomed, commerce crested waterways;
Gray cities, ganglia of trade, ablaze
With fiery forges, grimed with toil; the whole
In one arterial, palpitating soul
Conjunct by woven highway, God's and man's,
Dense-populous with questing caravans—
Arenalike extends the far flung plain
That moves to meet the marvel of the main,
As this again is mystic merged in sky—
Earth, sea and cloud, one sisterhood; and I

Myself akin (one kind) with each; with earth,
In solid substance and in body-birth;
With sea, in thoughts as restless and more wide
Than sweeps the waste domain of wind and tide;
And with the sky, in that unsubstanced part
That soon shall have its Here out There.

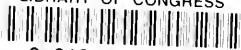
Oh, heart

Of Man, that loves and hopes, and fears—for so
We are as gods—the little gods that know,
But cannot shape and animate and rule,
As doth the Universal Will: Thy school
Hath taught me wisdom (of a sort). Love came,
And the Beloved died! Grief; toil; wealth; fame:
So ran the brutal sequence. In the mart
I played high stakes, and won; and no small part
In judgment hall and council chamber bore,
Nor got a mean repute when wanton War
Obscenely held the stage.

And now—for these?
No worn night watcher ere myself who sees
The sun surmount the calm world's redd'ning rim,
As I am last to see his glory dim,
Day done. At morn and eve at prayer I get,
Muezzin of this mountain minaret,
The virgin ear of God. At mid of night,
With sibillation of soft wings in flight,
I hear the homeless hosts of bygone days'
Unresting sprites flit through the starry ways;
Close consequent upon their Lost Platoon,
Oft, when at vigil with the wakeful moon,
I've heard the passage through the pregnant airs
Of souls homegoing, and good women's prayers.

The sun has set. Come, comrades, let us go—
A-wearied of the all too brilliant show!
Bear me within, to wait without a fear
The mingling of the raindrop with the mere!

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